PART V. EIGHT PAGES.

# NOTABLE LETTERS SIGNED BY FOREMOST AMERICANS

By the papers I see General Arnold is spreading death and desolation among you. How long is this curse upon the human race to go unpunished? Gertainly vengence will overtake him shortly; and oh! that it may happen in a way that his Country may be revenged upon him! But enough of the wretch for the present.

I congratulate you upon our happy prospects in Virginia. Our hopes and espectations are all alive here. Fortune must be very ill-natured to give the Modern Hanibal an opportunity to escape; if he falls, as there is little doubt of, the pride of Britain will tumble in the dust.

What a triumph to America! What a crown of laurels to General Washington!

I shall say nothing of our operations here as my public dispatches give as good an account as anything I can say. I shall only observe that whatever is our success and glory in Virginia they are indebted to manœuvers here for laying

The capture of Fort Ticonderoga by Ethan

Allen and his "Green Mountain Boys" "in the

name of the great Jehova and the Continental

Congress," was one of the most stirring and

dramatic incidents of the Ver of Independence.

Allen's autograph is one of the rarest of Rev-

olutionary names. The following letter, re-

## Historic Sidelights in Letters from Washington, Jackson, Lincoln and Other Men in Notable Group.

ETWEEN the discriminating autograph collector and the "autograph fiend" there is a wide difference. The latter has been anathematized by Robert Stevenson and by many others. An autograph collector, to use the definition of a well known writer on the subject, is one "who accumulates for the benefit of posterity either important documents or the letters of famous men." The "autograph hunter," who persistently pesters noted personages for their signatures in albums or on photographs, has nothing in common with the scientific collector of

Scattered throughout the country are many private collections of autographs of great literary and historical value, whose existence is known to few besides the friends of their modest owners. Though not large, the number of such collections has been rapidly growing, as the diversion and refreshment for both mind and body to be had in gathering these treasures has become known to an increasing number of people. Then, too, as Andrew Lang remarked. "It may well be that, in the long run, the collector and his family do not lose money. The amusement may chance to be a very fair investment." When discretion has been exercised in their purchase there are few things that can compare with high class autographs as an investment.

A comparatively "unknown" collection of autographs is the property of Mr. Joseph A. Mc-Aleenan, of New York City. Besides one of the few complete sets of the autographs of the signers of the Declaration of Independence this collection includes letters of all the Presidents of the United States, from Washington to Wilson; numerous letters of Revolutionary generals, many of them of great rarity and importance, and many other unique literary and historical documents. This interesting collection is for the most part unpublished.

#### LETTER THAT PROVES THAT WASH. INGTON WAS A DISTILLER.

It may come as a shock to some to learn that the "Father of his Country" was engaged in the liquor trade, but from his letter to his nephew, Colonel William Augustine Washington, relating to the operation of his distillery and the sale of whiskey, it appears that this was the case. This interesting letter, a fine example of Washington's beautiful handwriting,

Mount Vernon, Octr, 29th, 1799, is Donr Sir: Your letter of the 8th instant been duly received, and this letter will be died to you by Mr. Law, Lewis, to whom I have ted my Mill & Distillery, and who comes into parts to see if he can procure ion reasons terms) grain with which to keep them amed. Your advice and aid in enabling him to six these, would be serviceable to him, & ging to me. Mr. Lewis is a cautious man, and orsunder myself will serunalously fulfill any

it suits your convenience, letting me know, in the meantime, the quantity I may rely on, that my purchase of this grain may be regulated

Mrs. Washington has got tolerably well again, and unites with me in every good wish for you and yours. With very great esteem and friend-ship I remain Your affectionate uncle.

Go. WASHINGTON.

Washington died on December 14, 1799, just six weeks after the date of this letter, and Jefferson wrote, "Verily a great man has fallen in Israel." Mrs. Washington survived her husband two years, dying in 1801.

#### SHOWS THAT GENERAL CHARLES LEE AFFRONTS MRS. WASHINGTON.

Apropos of Mrs. Washington, a curious bit of gossip is revealed in a letter of General Nathanael Greene, dated from Trenton, N. J., December 17, 1778, and addressed to the American general, William Alexander Lord Stirling. The letter, which deals at length with conditions in the commissary department of the army, concludes with this interesting

General Lee and Col. Lawrens had a duel in which the former was wounded in the back. The cause of the duel I have not learnt, but it has been said General Lee affronted Mrs. Washington at the Assembly before His Excellency's arrival in town; but whether it is true or not I cannot

The "Col. Lawrens" referred to was Colone! John Laurens, the "Bayard of the Revolution," aid and secretary to General Washington, and his chief means of communication with the foreigners in the American service. At the battle of Monmouth Laurens is said to have saved the life of the commander in chief by his intrepidity. It was at this battle that the treacherous conduct of General Charles Lee provoked a fierce outburst of wrath on the part of Washington. Lee was tried and found guilty of misbehavior before the enemy. His insolent and offensive remarks regarding Washington, on learning of the decision of the court martial, caused Laurens to challenge and fight him a duel, in which Lee was wounded in the arm. It is not unlikely that Lee, who had a venomous and ungovernable tongue, referred to Mrs. Washington in his remarks. Colonel Laurens was killed in battle in the Carolinas while serving under General Greene.

> To the devil with . autograph-hunters Vailura Wheat Lois Stevenson

Executivo Mannon May 31. 1862 Kon Senator Serumons ( My dear Siv: This distressed girl pays she belongs to your state; that she was hewarth her father and bother, in on any, tilo they went with it to the penisula; the how has been killed them, & has fathe mades presonerand that the is here, wanting employment to tup. port horsige of you can he datafred that her story is comer please ser if you can not get me Sec. Chow or freed Nanton to fina har a place your his Adenical.



ferring to the capture of the fort, is one of the most curious and valuable documents in the McAleenan collection. The spelling in To The Honourable Jonathan Trumbull, Esq., Capt. General, Governor and Commander-in-Chief of the Colony of Connecticut.

Chief of the Colony of Connecticut.

Honble. Sir: The Hazard of Taking Ticonderoga was supposed to be such that the Comitee of War for the Expadition Imploy'd Mr. Jonas Fay of Bennington to Procede with the Scout to said Premises in Character of Doctor & Chirurgeon, which Character Mr. Fay has merited by Ten Years of Successfull Practice and as ther appears still a greater Prospect of Need of a Person skilled in these Sciences and as Doctor Fay has with him on the Premises Considerable of a Quantity of Medicines, &c., and is willing and well skilled to Continue the Campain in the said Capacity, I would therefore Recommend him to be Continued by Your Honour's Appointment and Ratification thereof thro the Campain in the Capacity aforesaid. Capacity aforesaid.

Capacity aforesaid.

This Recommendation and Request is made on the Hypothesis that Government will send a Military force to maintain the Soveranity of Lake Champlain in favour of the Colonies.

From Your Honour's Most Obedient Humble Servant.
This is the Largest Piece of Paper which at Present
Lasve.

E. A.

### ECHOES FROM A PAST EPOCH IN VALUA-BLE HISTORIC EPISTLES.

still alive. Besides the retiring President, Buchanan, Van Buren, Tyler, Fillmore and Pierce

During those fateful days immediately preceding the outbreak of hostilities, when civil war seemed inevitable, an effort toward peace was made in a letter from Franklin Pierce to Martin Van Buren, dated April 16, 1861, suggesting a conference of the ex-Presidents to be held in Philadelphia. Together with Van Buren's reply it forms a most interesting and little known chapter of Civil War history.

Concord, April 16, 1861.

My dear Sir: The present unparalled crisis in the affairs of our Country is. I have no doubt, filling you, as it is me, with the profoundest sorrow. Is there any human power which can avert the conflict of arms now apparently near at hand between two sections of the Union? The news to-night would seem to indicate that the central and border States (at least Virginia, Kanlucky and Tennessee) will, in view of the Military movements of the North, cast their lot with the States already secoded.

There is no time for effective assemblages of the people—no time for convention or protracted discussion. But it has occurred to me that you may take measures to suspend active military operations, secure opportunity for further reflection in the face of present dangers and save the most fearful calamity which has ever impended over a nation.

If the five retired Presidents of the United

most fearful calamity which has ever impended over a nation.

If the five retired Presidents of the United States, still living, were to meet at the earliest practicable day at the city where the Constitution was formed, might not their consultation, if it should result in concurrence of judgment, reach the Administration and the Country with some degree of power? No man can with propriety summon such a meeting but yourself. I feel that we ought not to omit at least an effort. Whatever the result may be, can we permit our remaining days or years to be disturbed by the consciousness that, after having been honored by the confidence of the Republic, we have passively seen it drift to destruction?

Should this suggestion commend itself to your judgment, will you communicate with Mr. Tyler, Mr. Fillmore & Mr. Buchanan, & advise me of the result. Respectfully and truly Your friend.

FRANKLIN PIERCE.

To this letter Mr. Van Buren made a lengthy reply, declining to take the initiative in

Mount Verson Och 29.1799. My dear Sir, Your letter of the 8" instant has been duly received, and this letter will be handed to you by he Law Lewis, to whom! have rested my Nik & Distellery, and who comes ento your parts to resif he can pro cure for reasonable terms) grain with which to keep them employed .\_ Your advice and and in enabling him to obtain these werds be serviceable to hem, dobliping me . -M. Lewis is a cautions man, and Bersuale my self with Scrubulously fulfil any On tracts he may exter into. - You will be perfectly rate, conceive, in declaring his. Two hundred gallers of Whiskey with be ready this day for your cak, and the sooner et is taken the better, as the demand for this article (in these parts) is brisis. - The Rya may he rest when it suits your converience letting me know, in the meantime, the quartity. may cely on, that my purchase of this grain may be regulated thereby. Mer Washington has got tolerably wall again, and unites with me in wary good wish for you and yours. - With very great esteen and friendship I remain Your affectionate uncley or: Wim a. Wathington

36 Ourlow Sy. has Sur archie I have chosen the black edges paper to levote my gring, that I am unwels and can't go ow Edina . Why I think I have had to repen 10 Friends the west , and believe me the person who 4 most way gale 4 Jour factifully los m Shackuray the scheme.

DRAWN FROM PAINTING .

BY

GILBERTSTUART

Andrew Jackson was one of the most picturesque and interesting figures in American history. His letters are often remarkable revelations of character. Though a letter of introduction does not generally yield much that is characteristic, the following missive presenting his nephew, Andrew Jackson Donelson, to Captain Partridge, superintendent of the Military Academy at West Point, is unusually typical of "Old Hickory."

Nashville, January 12, 1817.
Sir: With the frankness of a soldier, without preface or apology, I present my nephew, Andrew J. Donelson, to your acquaintance and ask for him your friendship & esteem so far as his

merits may deserve them.

He has obtained a warrant to enter the Military Academy over which you superintend at West Point. I have furnished him with the funds West Point, I have furnished him with the funds for necessary expense, & authority to draw on me for any further sum that may be necessary to meet his wants. I have recommended him to use economy, but to show a proper distinction between that & parsimony, and have to request your friendly attention not only to him, but to my ward, Edward Butler, who is already with you, whose wants I wish also to be supplied with that attention due to the son of a meritorious officer & good man. Edward has also authority to draw on me for such sums as may be necessary to meet his wants.

I have great solicitude for the welfare and respectability of these two youths. & recommend them to your friendly care and attention.

When Abraham Lincoln took the oath of

When Abraham Lincoln took the oath of office as President of the United States on March 4, 1861, five of his predecessors were the matter because he doubted the success of

Mr. McAleenan's collection is especially notable for its fine Lincolniana, containing, as it does, numerous letters and documents of and relating to the Great Emancipator. Some of these throw most pleasent lights on the character of the sagacious, great-hearted President, Follows a political letter of unusual interest:

Springfield, Ills., April 6, 1860

Hon. R. M. Corwine.

My dear Sir: Reaching home yesterday after
an absence of more than two weeks, I found your
letter of the 24th of March. Remembering that letter of the 24th of March. Remembering that when a not very great man begins to be mentioned for a very great position, his head is very likely to be a little turned, I concluded I am not the fitted person to answer the questions you ask. Making due allowance for this, I think Mr. Seward is the very best candidate we could have for the North of Illinois, and the very worst for the South of it. The estimate of Gov. Chase here is neither better nor worse than that of Seward, we were that he is a newer man. They are re-

is neither better nor worse than that of Seward, except that he is a newer man. They are regarded as being almost the same, seniority giving Seward the inside track.

Mr. Bates, I think, would be the best man for the South of our State, and the worst for the North of it. If Judge McLean was fifteen, or even ten years younger, I think he would be stronger than either in our State, taken as a whole; but his great age, and the recollection of the death of Harrison and Taylor have, so far, prevented his being much spoken of hero.

I really believe we could carry the State for either of them, or for any one who may be nominated; but doubtless it would be easier to do it with some than with others.

I feel myself disqualified to speak of myself in the matter.

the matter.

I fear this letter will be of little value to you; but I can make it no better under the circumstances. Let it be strictly confidential, not that there is anything really objectionable in it, but because it might be misconstrued.

Yours ary truly,

A. LINCOLN.

To Senator James F. Simmons, of Rhode Island, in reference to the case of a girl bereft of relatives by the war and seeking employ-

Continued on third page.

confirmets he may enter into. You "I'll be ner-fectly safe, I conceive, in declaring this. Two hundred gallons of Whiskey will be ready this day for your call, and be conce it is taken the better, as the demand for this article in these parts) is brisk. The Rye may be sent when

Another letter of Greene is interesting from is reference to the traiter, Benedict Arnold, and the havor wrought in Vi.g.nla by a British army under his command.